

1 Corinthians 15:12-34 The Triumph of the Resurrection

One of the things I love about the Christian faith is that it is a robust faith.

A) Built on substance, facts, not feelings and emotions or some random ideology

B) Our faith is built on the Proclamation of Jesus in John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

C) Bold statement – absolute statement – THE WAY.....

Jesus backed up that proclamation when he died on the cross

A) And then 3 days later rose from the dead – thus proving he was who he said he was

B) When you have someone who predicts their own death - and then predict their own Resurrection – 3 days later

C) And they pull it off – that person is worth following – NO ONE ELSE HAS EVER DONE THAT!

D) We celebrate Easter all year long – Everything hinges on the Resurrection

So here in 1 Corinthians 15 Paul is talking about the importance of the Resurrection

A) And what it means to us as believers NOW – and in the future.

B) Last week Pastor Jamie opened up our conversation in V.1-11

C) I want to read over those verses again make some quick observations for sake of context –

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and **in which you stand** (firm foundation) 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

The gospel is the simple truth that - Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for our sins –

A) 3 days later Rose to give us life To all who believe in the name of Jesus

B) Paul wants the Corinthians and us to know that OUR faith is not in Vain

C) Our faith is based on facts

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

Fact #1 What Jesus did in death and Resurrection was prophesied in the OT scriptures

A) There are over 300 prophecies that were fulfilled by Jesus in his birth, life, death and Resurrection-

B) That is some - Serious evidence

C) That is one of the things that makes Christianity so unique –

1) Fulfilled predictions – hold up in a Court of law

Fact #2 The Eyewitnesses -

5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. **died** 7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. 8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

A) Seen by Peter, the 12, 500 people at once – again all the apostles – and last of all by me

B) That is a lot of eyewitness testimony – this is not 2-3 guys making up some story

Fact #3 The Power of Transformation – look at what Paul says about himself

9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of **God I am what I am**, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

11 Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

Paul's own story was a proof of the power of the Resurrection

A)Your story

B)My Dad story -this has to be real – Only a Resurrection Jesus could change this guy this much!

So that is the Focus of V.1-11

12 Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

A)Understand that the Resurrection is pivotal to our faith – those who said that say there is no resurrection don't realize – what they are doing

B)Football with no ball – just a bunch of guys dressed funny – running around a field banging into each other – **what is the point**

C)If there is no resurrection – we have nothing
13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. 14 And if Christ is not risen, then **our preaching is empty** and **your faith is also empty.**

D)Preaching is empty – why are we here -Bingo – Bar –

1)No Resurrection – your faith is empty – no substance – cotton candy

15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise.

A)If there is not a resurrection- all those eyewitnesses are liars

16 **For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.**

17 **And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!**

B)Not only is your faith empty – but you are still in your sins –

1)Still guilty -no freedom no forgiveness

18 **Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.**

C)If there is no resurrection – those who have died are just gone –

1)No hope – no joy – just gone – done

19 **If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.**

D)We are to be pitied as those foolish Christians – who believing a fairy tale –

1)KJV – We are the most miserable – we are holding on to something that has no substance pipe dream – no reality

So if there is no resurrection we are in bad shape!

20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, {This is a reality not a fairy tale} **Christ is risen from the dead** and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. Died.

Here Paul begins to deal with the impact of the Resurrection 3 aspects

A)The Redeemer, the Redeemed and the Restoration

B)THE REDEEMER

1)PAUL introduces a beautiful picture – Jesus has become the first fruits of those who have died

In Leviticus 23:10 we see the instructions that the Lord gave to the people of Israel

A)Before you could harvest your whole field and bring in your crop

B)you would cut down the first Sheaf of wheat or barley – bring it to priest

1))That was called the first fruits – first of many more to come!

C)Sometimes they would even plant in segments – weeks apart in different parts of the field –

1)In case there was inclement weather – the harvest would not be destroyed

D)But in every harvest – they would bring the first fruits to the Lord

1)This is the first of many

Paul's analogy – Jesus is the first of many who would rise again from the dead?

A)Wait was he really first? – Elijah and Elisha – Jesus – Nain, Lazarus - **They all died again**

B)Jesus is the first to be raised – never to die again.

1)You could say those others were resuscitated

C)Jesus was raised from the dead – never to die again! –

1) He ascended into glory

D) He is the first of many – who are going to follow suit!

the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. died

E) It's really a beautiful term. It's better than saying,

1) He is the firstfruits of them that are rotting in the ground."

2) It's just a nicer way of saying it. They were sleeping, waiting resurrection.

Now understand this the Bible is clear - when a Christian dies, the moment he dies, he's in the presence of Jesus Christ.

A) "Absent from the body" – what? – "present with the Lord," [2 Corinthians 5:8](#).

B) Paul says in [Philippians 1:23](#), he says, "I'd like to stay with you; far better to depart and be with Christ."

C) The believer goes immediately to be with Christ in His spirit,

1) but his body sleeps in the grave, awaiting resurrection.

C) Not soul sleep – the Soul or the Spirit is in Heaven – the body is sleeping in the ground – dead –

D) The Redeemer – Jesus is the firstfruits – the first of many who will rise

#2 The Redeemed - It is all about identification

21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam **all die**, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

A) Adam's sin affected us all – sinners – death sentence – the stats on death are impressive – 10 out of 10

B) We are connected to death through Adam

1) We are connected to Life and resurrection through Jesus

C) Born into Adam – we are born again into Jesus

If you are in Christ here today – You have life – you have hope

A) Even when you die – You go to heaven – new body

B) 2 Corinthians 5 not naked - not unembodied spirits –

C) But it is not your final resurrected body – Temporal Covering

22 For as in Adam **all die**, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

A) At His coming - the rapture of the Church – Something amazing if going to happen

B) Those who have died in Christ /who are in heaven are going to be united with their physical bodies in some way.

C) Insight in V.51 - Speaking here of what happens the rapture:

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall **all** be changed—52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, **and we shall be changed**.

We will not all die But we will all be changed

A) Metamorphosis – Caterpillar to the butterfly - Our bodies are changed on the way up – those dead – also experience a change

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

B) The dead in Christ – partake in the rapture as well.

1) The rapture becomes the turning point for Resurrection of the Redeemed

C) Both for those who are living and those who have died

D) Paul deals with this in 1 Thessalonians 4 – turn

The believers were wondering if those who have died already in Christ will miss out on the rapture

¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

A) At the rapture: Those who have died will rise first – party in the sky

B) They are joined in some way with their heavenly body – we are caught up - Jesus takes us all to heaven

C) Our bodies are transformed into our new spiritual bodies

1) Those who were dead in Christ - are given their new complete spiritual bodies –

Here are the questions that arise with this: What part of their body is joined to them? How? –

A) Ezk 37 – Valley of dry bones not flesh and blood? – DNA?

B) Lots of opinions – we really don't know the answer to that? Mystery – wait and see -

C) Another question – Cremation? –

1) Well listen after about 20-30 years your bones will decompose into the soil anyway – what difference

D) Nothing is too hard for God – Oh no they cremated him – what am I going to do?

So Paul tells us about the Redeemer – Jesus is the First fruits

A) The Redeemed – We are going to be raised to life

New body – new home – glorious

B) No pain - no fatigue – no weight gain –

1) Doesn't wear out -

C) Next the final Restoration

²⁴ Then *comes* the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule

and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For “He has put all things under His feet.” But when He says “all things are put under Him,” it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. ²⁸ Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

C) After Rapture and the seven year tribulation – Jesus returns at his 2nd coming –

D) we come back with him

1) Rule and reign – 1,000 years – Millennial reign of Jesus

End of all of that - Satan is let lose – then destroyed – death is destroyed

A) Everything is turned over to the Father – new heaven and new earth

B) What comes next? We don't know – SURPRISE!

1) God keeps us in the dark – because he knows it would blow our minds

C) Too much to handle

So let's wrap this up: Paul is making a case for the logic and the necessity of the resurrection.

A) If There Is No Resurrection it would be meaningless to live as a Christian

B) He is going to give 4 analogies – One from their culture and three from his own experience

C) First we have the cultural example -

²⁹ Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?

Now this is one of the weirdest verses in the Bible – and it has been misused – proxy baptism for dead people

A) That is not what Paul is saying here at all – Bible is clear – each person is responsible for his own faith

B) Paul is using a cultural example that his readers would clearly understand.

1) This was a practice that was happening in that day

2) Paul is identifying a practice for the sake of an analogy – a practice he didn't approve of

C) Paul is basically saying: if there is no resurrection of the dead –

1) then why are they getting baptized for the dead – what is the point – **If the dead are not going to rise**

Just because he is using analogy doesn't mean that he is approving of the practice.

A) It would be like me making the point that people do things for the affect it has on their lives

B) People go to the gym to get in shape

1) People take drugs to get high –

C) Making an analogy -not advocating taking drugs

In the Corinthian culture – people were getting baptized for the dead because they truly believed in an afterlife – a Resurrection

A) They were hoping that they could affect the outcome of a loved one's eternal destiny

B) Paul is saying if they don't believe in a resurrection – why bother - what is the point.

C) So that is his cultural analogy that would have made sense to his readers – because of the practice

Then he gives three personal analogies

A) If there is not a resurrection if Jesus is not risen then

30 And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour?
{He endured a lot of turmoil for being a Christ follower

31 I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. – He lived a life of great sacrifice – dying daily to his flesh in order to serve Christ

32 If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? He endured great persecution for following Jesus – always opposition

B) But all of that was worth it to Paul – Love of Christ compelled him

C) Paul gets sarcastic - If the dead do not rise, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!” ☺ = what is the point

Let's be realistic

33 Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.”

So.....

34 Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

Shame: Some of you have been living like there is no Resurrection

Practice the presence of God

The reality of the Resurrection is our Hope
The reality of the Resurrection should affect the way that we live

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. 1 John 3:1-3